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Contact: Celia Schorr, WSF Communications, (206) 515-3918

WSF Moves Toward Construction of New Ferries

SEATTLE – The Washington State Department of Transportation/Washington State Ferries (WSDOT/WSF) today took a major step toward launching the first new vessels in the system since 1999.

“We are pleased to be moving forward, and we are thrilled that ferry riders are a step closer to experiencing the new boats,” said Mike Anderson, WSF executive director. “The new vessels are urgently needed—they are replacing ferries that are more than 75 years old.”

WSF issued the additional Request for Proposal (RFP) documents for the design and construction of the four new ferries. The documents include technical information, contracts and instructions necessary for prequalified shipbuilders to continue with the development of their proposals.

An independent expert review panel reviewed and commented on the RFP documents prior to their release. The panel was selected by WSF, in consultation with the Governor’s office, to provide independent expertise throughout the vessel procurement process, and to help WSF identify and overcome project risks and develop contingency plans.

“The panel brings an independent perspective to our process,” stated Anderson. “And their expertise and judgment will support delivery of high quality vessels at a fair cost to taxpayers and the ferry-riding public.”

The total project cost for the four vessels is estimated at \$321 million. WSF expects to have the first vessel under construction in 2008 and ready for service in Fall 2009.

The 144-car, 1,500 passenger ferries are expected to be deployed on the Mukilteo-Clinton, Seattle-Bremerton, and San Juan Islands routes. The ferries will feature the latest technologies, and will be more comfortable and accessible.

The new vessel procurement process is guided by legislation that requires that the vessels be built in Washington following a “design-build” procurement process.

The propulsion system and diesel generators for the new vessels were contracted for under separate RFP’s.

The release of the additional RFP documents signals the second phase in the procurement process. During the first phase three shipyards (J.M. Martinac Shipbuilding, Nichols Brothers Boat Builders and Todd Pacific Shipyards Corporation) qualified as technically and financially capable of building the boats. These shipyards now have the information necessary to decide whether they will bid on the contract.

The RFP can be found on the web at

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/your_wsf/doing_business_with/contracts/RequestForProposals/. Information about the new vessel program can be found at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/ferries/newvessel/ or by calling Joy Goldenberg at (206)515-3411.